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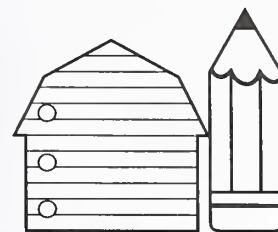
Ag in the Classroom

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Notes

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World Food Summit Reflects International Commitment to Ending Hunger

More than 50 years ago, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations (UN) was founded with the goal of eradicating hunger around the world. That promise remains unfulfilled. But an international World Food Summit, to be held November 13-17 in Rome, will focus international attention on the continuing need to work toward the elimination of hunger.

Over the past 50 years, agricultural production has managed to keep pace with and even outstrip population growth. Even so,

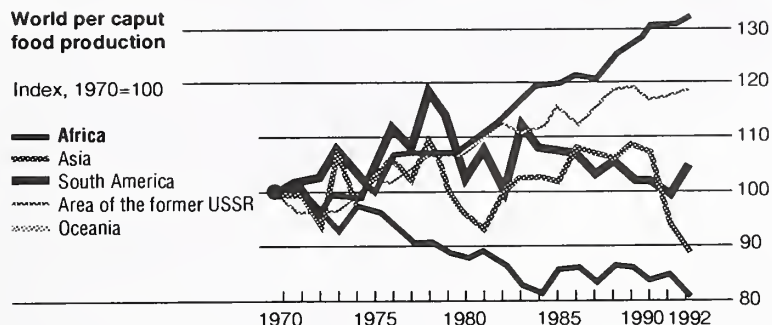
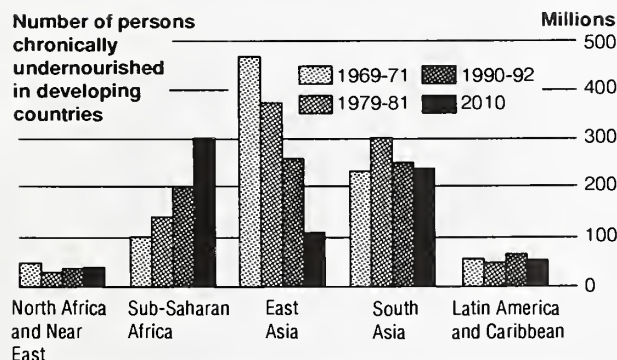
more than 800 million people — one in seven of the world's population — suffer chronic hunger and malnutrition. Almost 200 million of these are children. UN agencies estimate that more than three million children die each year from hunger-related causes.

Today, over 80 countries, known as "food-deficit" nations, are unable to grow enough food to meet their own needs and cannot readily afford to fill the gaps with food imports. It is estimated that the food import costs to these countries will rise by over \$3 billion in 1996 alone.

Agriculture has been losing ground as a priority for research, investment, and external assistance, according for information compiled by the World Food Summit Secretariat.

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Global hunger: widespread, persistent, unacceptable



From the Director:

We hope you will utilize the World Food Summit in November to address the food system in your classes and programs. There will be a great deal of attention paid to food and hunger. It should make us appreciate the bounty that American agriculture provides. Issues that the world faces concerning our burgeoning population place agriculture in the forefront. Let us not forget that we rely on agriculture to provide a great deal more than food. Pharmaceuticals, paper, environmentally friendly ink, clothing from natural fibers, fuels, sporting equipment, flowers for celebrations, ingredients for perfumes and flavorings, and a great deal more come from the food and fiber system.

Fall is the time we think of harvests and celebrate them. The book included, *Harvest Year* by Chris Peterson, identifies a harvest for every month of the year. We hope you will enjoy this new book.

In our last issue, we indicated that the dates and location for the 1997 National Ag in the Classroom Conference would be announced in this issue. And so it is! The 1997 National Ag in the Classroom Conference will be held in New England on the second week of July. Conference details, costs, agenda, and registration form will be in an upcoming issue.

The two new Internet addresses provided are for the USDA and American Farm Bureau Federation. These will provide you with access to information about both the agency and organization. Many of you have asked for an explanation of how USDA is now organized. This address can provide you with that organization. It does not give all the programs housed within a given agency, however.

Elizabeth A. Wolanyk

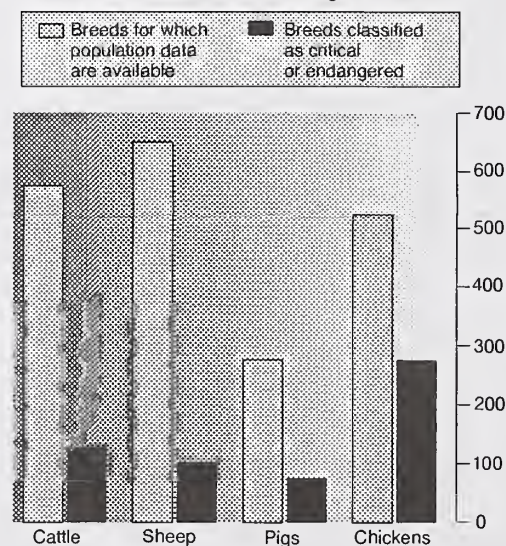
Elizabeth A. Wolanyk

Continued from page 1

The future holds even greater challenges. By the year 2030, the world's population will grow from its current 5.5 billion to approximately 8.5 billion people. The amount of arable land per capita will fall by nearly half. The human pressures that lead to deforestation, water shortages, land degradation, over-fishing, and air pollution will rise steadily. They will rise even more dramatically in those countries least able to cope with them — the low-income, food-deficit nations.

The challenge of the World Food Summit is to prepare a blueprint for feeding an ever-growing world population in an environmentally sustainable manner. The heads of state and government who gather in Rome for the five-day World Food Summit will place food — the first and fundamental requirement for life — at the top of the global agenda alongside peace and stability.

Domestic animal diversity at risk



Virginia Teacher's "Pig-Cabulary" Increases Agricultural Awareness

When Betty Ann Blanton, a fourth grade teacher at Richard C. Haydon School in Manassas, Virginia, was active in 4-H, she was the first girl in the state of Virginia to raise a pig in the Sears & Roebuck pig project. So perhaps it's no surprise that pigs are still an important part of her teaching strategy.

"Each year, I choose a farm animal to serve as a theme for my classroom," she says. This year, it was pigs. When students walked into her class on the first day of school, they were greeted with a large bulletin board that read, "Rootin' Around Virginia" (fourth graders study state history and geography).

Later, students were challenged to write an original story starting with the words, "This little piggy went . . ." The first week's vocabulary (called "pig-cabulary" by Blanton) introduced students to words they might not know, including boar and sow.

In fact, it is because of what students *don't* know about agriculture that her principal has been such an active supporter of Blanton's classroom focus on agriculture. "In today's technological age, we sometimes forget that milk comes from a breathing animal and not a machine. We need to make sure that animal has everything it needs to produce milk. Kids today are so far removed from plants and animals that they lose their connection to how important it is to take care of our natural resources so we can preserve them for future generations," says Robert Thomas.

Blanton first learned about the Ag in the Classroom program when she was invited to present a session on food safety in elementary schools at a national conference. "I learned more than I taught," she says. Hearing that a summer teacher workshop was planned for nearby Maryland, Blanton requested that she be allowed to participate. She left the workshop armed with lots of hands-on lesson plans and the inspiration to incorporate agriculture into her lessons.

Working with the Virginia Farm Bureau, Blanton and other teachers in the school sponsor an Ag Day at Haydon. "Our activities focus on

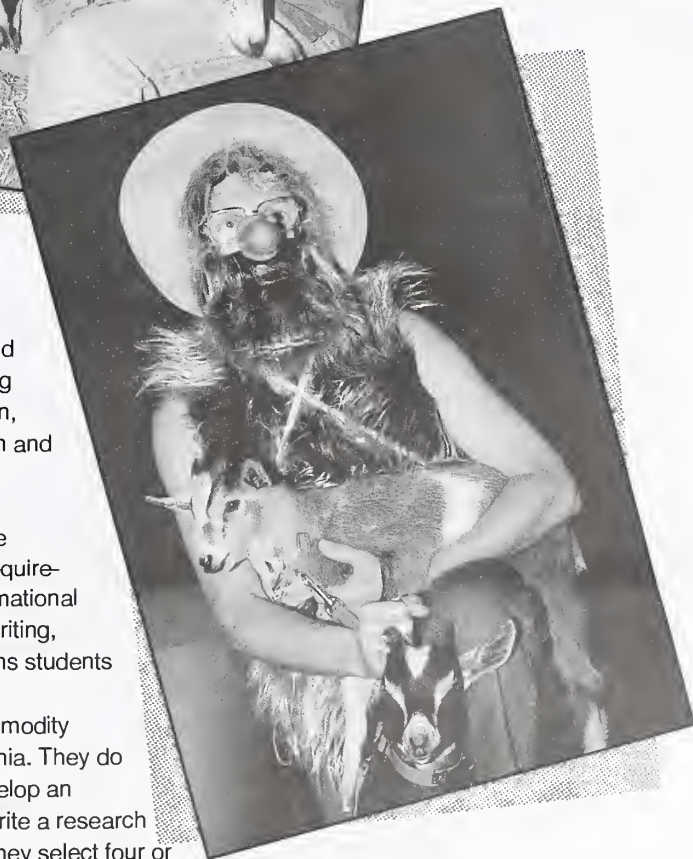
three major areas: food and fiber, marketing and distribution, and production and processing," Blanton says.

To meet the curriculum requirement for informational reading and writing, Blanton assigns students to learn about one plant commodity grown in Virginia. They do research, develop an outline, and write a research report. Then they select four or five important facts and create a large wall poster in the shape of their plant commodity.

"Students enjoy these activities because they're hands-on," Blanton says. "And they definitely learn a lot about where their food comes from. Until they walk into my classroom, many of my students really think that food comes off the shelf."



Fourth graders learn about Virginia history and geography while learning about agriculture in Betty Ann Blanton's classroom.



Video Highlights Safety on Farm Visits

Teachers who have taken students on farm visits know that these trips are often the highlight of the year. But children who have not grown up on farms do not always have an appreciation for how their actions can place them at risk during a farm visit.

A new video and teacher's guide gives elementary school children an understanding of how they can make their farm visit safe as well as fun.

Visiting a Farm? Be Safe and Sound, Says Safety Hound was produced for the University of Vermont Extension System's Farm Safety Program.

The video begins with a school bus full of children on their way to visit a farm. Costumed mascots — Safety Hound (the adult) and Safety Hound, Jr. (the child) give children the information they'll need while they visit the farm.

For example, they learn four guidelines to make their visit a safe one:

Always ask permission before touching anything
Don't wander off the main tour path.

Farm machinery is always appealing to children, who usually ask if they can have a ride. Safety Hound tells them, however, that the safety rule is "No seat, no rider."

The video and accompanying teacher's guide also discuss other safety considerations during farm visits: animals, manure pits, farm machinery, containers that may hold chemicals, doors or ladders, gates, puddles, and "plops." The teacher's guide notes that "people who work around farms are generally aware of the hazards to which they are exposed on a daily basis; they may expect that others will have more of an awareness than those of us who are uninitiated actually have."

Other suggestions for a successful farm visit include wearing appropriate clothing, wearing sunscreen, and leaving toys and games at home. Copies of the video and the 20-page teacher's guide are \$20, plus \$3 shipping and handling. Make checks payable to Perceptions, Inc., R.R. #1, Box 1590, Charlotte, VT 05445 or fax orders to 802-425-3628.

A visit to a farm will be safe and happy if children take a tip from Safety Hound.





Year-Round Harvest Celebrated in Cris Peterson's *Harvest Year*

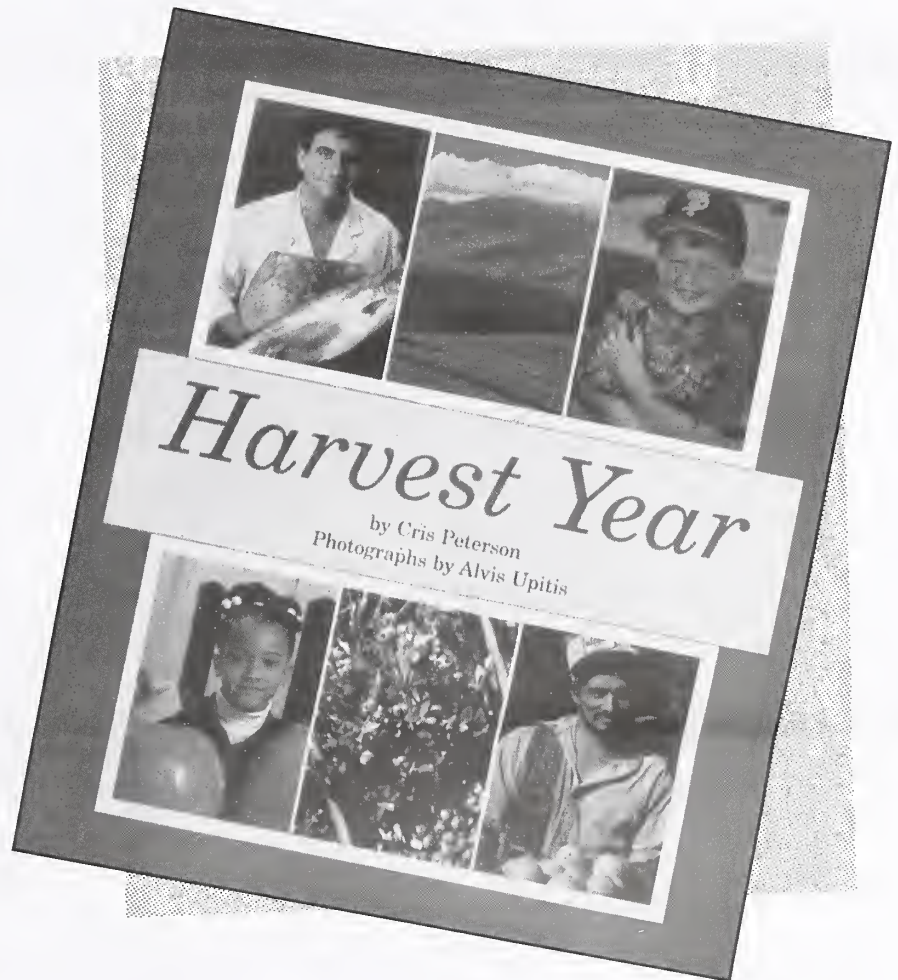
Autumn is the season traditionally associated with harvesting. But as Cris Peterson's book *Harvest Year* demonstrates, harvest is a year-round season in America.

With maps and color photographs, young readers learn that somewhere in the 50 states, there's *always* a crop being harvested. January, for example, is harvest time for carrots in Texas, pineapples in Hawaii, and grapefruit in Florida. June means that wheat is ready for harvesting in Kansas and salmon are ready to be netted in Alaska. December brings a pecan harvest in New Mexico.

The text of *Harvest Year* is clear and concise. Stunning photographs by Alvis Uptis help children understand the colors of the fields and orchards as well as the machinery used to bring in the crops. Each month also includes pictures of children from across the country enjoying the bounty of the harvest.

The book would be an excellent way to introduce young children to the months of the year. Older students will improve their mapping skills and learn about technology.

Harvest Year is available for \$14.95 from Boyds Mills Press, 815 Church Street, Honesdale, PA 18431.



Language Arts Materials Introduce Students to Benny Broccoli

Children like to learn about food and agriculture. Elementary school teachers are always looking for ways to encourage their children to read and write. A teaching kit developed by the American Crop Protection Association offers games, projects, and whole-language story ideas that help children learn more about plant growth.

The materials focus on food crops that children eat as part of a healthy diet.

They are introduced to cartoon characters representing the "Plantastic Four Food Families": Wendy Wheat, Terri Tomato, Orlando Orange, Cliff Corn, and, of course, Benny Broccoli.

Materials are designed for students in grades 2, 3, and 4. Agriculture and nutrition are the main topics, but materials also deal with mapping, math, and other subject areas. Children learn about the pests that attack plants, how crops are protected, and the various forms different crops take in the grocery store, at home, and in the cafeteria.

A rap, "Hip-Hop the Crop" helps young children learn all the parts of a plant:

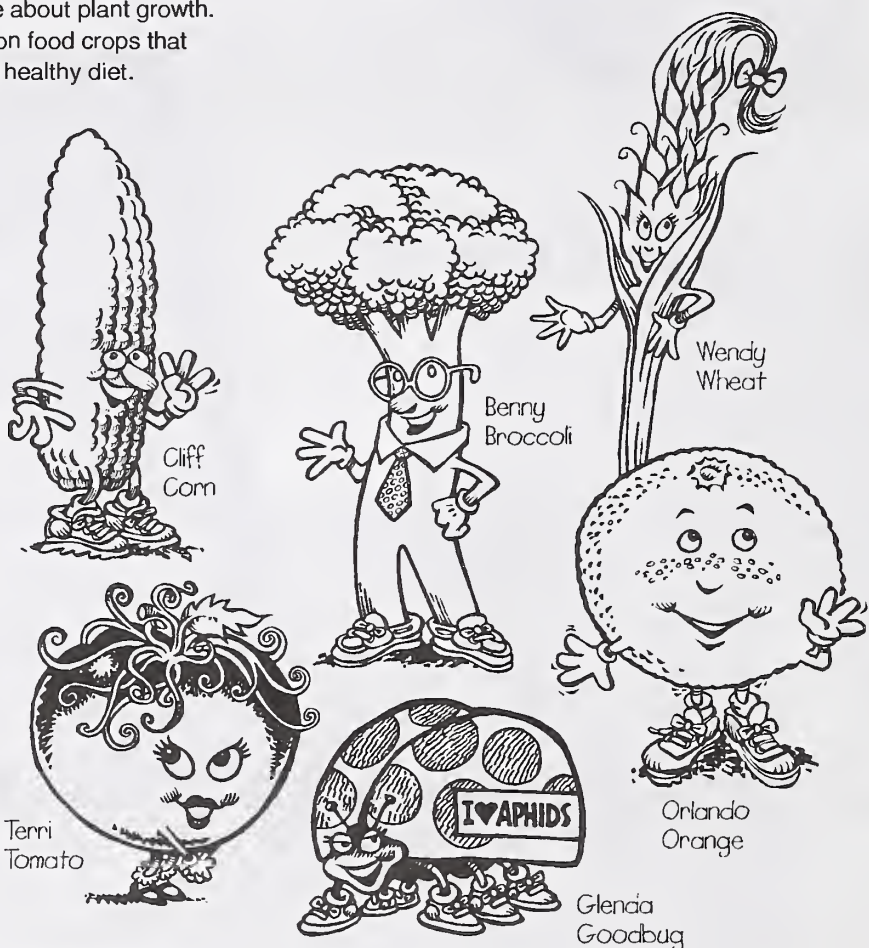
My roots are at the bottom, below the ground
Stems are in the middle, with leaves all around,

My flowers make seeds which fall on the earth

Then the seeds are there for another plant's birth.

As a follow-up activity, children are challenged to create their own rap about plants.

The activity "Growing Concerns" offers suggestions for germinating seeds. Through hands-on horticultural techniques, children learn different ways to sprout plants. They hone their observational and writing skills to



Benny Broccoli and his friends will help turn elementary school classrooms into a garden of learning.

report on a plant's beginning stages of development.

The teaching package includes student activity sheets, a teacher's guide, and a four-color poster. The materials are available free of charge from the American Crop Protection Association, Suite 400, 1156 Fifteenth Street NW, Washington, DC 20005.

I N T E R N E T

Ag on the Internet

Check out these sites on the Internet.

USDA

<http://www.usda.gov>

USDA's web site includes news and information about the department (including press releases, speeches, and publications information).

Farm Bureau

<http://www.fb.com>

Farm Fun, Farm Facts, and State Connect are some of the specialized information resources available at this web site.

A "Road Map" to Using the Internet

You wouldn't get on an unfamiliar highway without consulting a road map—and the same is true for the Internet. *The Internet Roadmap for Educators*, published by Educational Research Service (ERS), serves as a guide to using the Internet both in and out of the classroom.

The book includes sections on how schools and students are using the Internet, offers some education-related sites, newsgroups, and mailing lists, and describes how to use tools such as e-mail and the World Wide Web. A special section called "Using the Internet Safely" addresses safety issues that may arise when students explore the Internet.

Single copies are \$10 for ERS subscribers and \$20 for nonsubscribers, plus the larger of \$3.50 or 10% of the purchase price for postage and handling. Write ERS at 2000 Clarendon Blvd., Arlington, VA 22201 or call 703-243-2100.

Apply for Youth Garden Grants

Schools have found that gardens offer a wonderful way for students to learn about agriculture. If your school has a garden — or plans to start one — you may be interested in the Youth Garden Grants offered by the National Gardening Association (NGA). Last year, more than 750,000 students in schools and organizations grants won grants that consist of hundreds of dollar's worth of tools, seeds, garden products, and educational materials.

This year, NGA will award 300 grants. This year's awards will be granted on the basis of innovative programming, sustainability, community support, strong leadership, and need.

To receive an application for the 1997 Youth Garden Grants, call 1-800-538-7476 or e-mail to nga@garden.org. Or, send your request to Garden Grants, National Gardening Association, 180 Flynn Ave., Burlington, VT 05401. Deadline for completed applications is November 15, 1996.



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The individuals listed here are key reference persons in each state. If you have any questions, want to make reports, or need more information about your state's Ag in the Classroom program, contact the following:

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